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MAGNA CARTA AND OTHER ADDRESSES. By William D. Guthrie. New York: Columbia University Press, 1916. Pp. vi, 282.

This volume contains ten addresses delivered on various occasions between 1906 and 1915 by a lawyer whose marked characteristic seems to be distrust of new ideas. It may be taken for granted that all proposals for change are not desirable without assuming that all proposals for change are undesirable, yet one cannot escape the conclusion from reading these addresses that Mr. Guthrie instinctively assumes the latter position. To him everything that is old and well-established is *sacro-sanct*. His method of appraising new ideas and his judgment thereon are, therefore, necessarily unscientific. The value of his writing consists in its exposition and illustration of that attitude of mind not uncommon which in the midst of the hurly burly of the modern world and its tremendous currents and cross-currents of new thought shuts itself within the sheltering walls of inherited ideas and refuses with Podsnapian gesture to recognize the force of current opinion. These addresses breathe a spirit of conventional patriotism and glorify all of the legal myths which we have inherited from an earlier day. Mr. Guthrie panegyricizes *Magna Carta* as a great popular document. He looks upon it as the guarantee of trial by jury. He talks about "the plain people of England" as though they had anything to do with the wresting of *Magna Carta* from the reluctant King John and he startles us with the statement that "the framers had grasped the great truth that jurisprudence is a science." One reads these things with a certain degree of pleasure in no way related to one's belief in their truth or soundness. Perhaps the value of Mr. Guthrie's views on the legal and governmental problems that he discusses can be best gauged by reading his address on Catholic Parochial Schools, in which he argues in favor of granting to denominational schools moneys out of the public funds because such schools are rendering a public service. He does not seem to be conscious of the fact that the public service rendered by such schools is questionable, since, unlike free, undenominational public schools, they are teaching and perpetuating that dogmatism which has in all time past stood in the way of that more perfect union which it is the aim of humanitarian and undenominational philosophy to secure.

In his address on Nominating Conventions, he recommends that the nomination of candidates in a political convention should be made part of the fundamental law of the land so that the legislature may not abridge it by adopting the Primary Election system or any other method of nomination. He looks upon the nominating convention as in its essence fundamental to the perpetuation of representative Republican government.

Finally attention may be drawn to Mr. Guthrie's view that the Mayflower Compact was in effect the first American Constitutional Convention, that in its phrase "to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal laws . . . for the general good of the colony" we are to find the germ from which has since developed our whole system of constitutional jurisprudence. This further illustrates how mistaken zeal blind to historic truth may, through misplaced emphasis and mistaken interpretation, go far toward perpetuating errors which scientific and historical investigation seek painfully and persistently to correct.

David Werner Amram.